



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board Supports Ridley-Thomas' Request for Reward in Hit-and-Run that Killed 14-year-old

LOS ANGELES -- Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas asked the Board of Supervisors on to approve a \$10,000 reward in exchange for information leading to the arrest of the hit-in-run motorist that killed 14-year-old Semaj Spencer early Sunday on Imperial Highway and Crenshaw Blvd. in Inglewood.

Semaj was struck shortly just after 1 a.m. Sunday on Imperial Highway, just east of Crenshaw Boulevard, according to Inglewood police. Witnesses said he was knocked out of his shoes and dragged some 50 feet by the vehicle before the driver sped away.

Authorities are looking for a car described as a dark red Ford Focus with tinted windows and probably has major front-end damage.

"Semaj's grieving family has made an impassioned plea for the driver to surrender to authorities," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. "I am urging who ever is responsible for Semaj's death to please do the right thing and turn yourself in."

Anyone with information on the driver was asked to call the Inglewood Police Dept. at (310) 412-5134.

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INGLEWOOD (CNS) - A 14-year-old boy killed by a hit-and-run driver in Inglewood had been walking across an unmarked section of the street, a police officer said Monday.

Semaj Spencer was struck just after 1 a.m. Sunday on Imperial Highway, just east of Crenshaw Boulevard, according to Inglewood police.

“I don't want to say he was technically jaywalking, but he was crossing in an unmarked area,” said Lt. Mike McBride of the Inglewood Police Department in response to a reporter's question.

McBride told City News Service that family members had told police the boy “had crossed Imperial Highway outside the marked crosswalk.”

But, he said, “it doesn't matter. Cars still have to watch out for pedestrians, just as pedestrians have to watch out for cars.” Witnesses said the driver sped away at speeds up to 100 mph.

McBride said that officers in one patrol car heard a crash and saw a speeding vehicle and tried to catch up with it, but were unsuccessful. Authorities are looking for a car that may be a dark red Ford Focus, 2002 or newer, with tinted windows and probably has major front-end damage.

On Sunday, Semaj's family grieved the boy's death and made an impassioned plea for the driver to surrender to authorities. “Would you please, please, please turn yourself in if you have a conscience,” the victim's mother, Penny Hoover, said. “If you have children, would you please, I beg of you to please come forward.”

“He was a 14-year-old kid trying to grow up,” said Jerry Hoover, the boy's father. “He'll never have that opportunity. You took it away. You took it away.”

Community activists and the boy's parents were at the accident scene this afternoon to ask the public for help in identifying the driver. Anyone with information on the driver was asked to call Inglewood police at (310) 412-5134.